

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A vent filter seal for a sterilization container having planar interior surfaces and exterior surfaces that enclose an interior space and a vent in one of the container planar surfaces through which sterilization media is introduced into the interior space of the container from outside the container and a sheet filter inside the container covering the vent comprising:

a vent recess in ~~the~~ an interior container planar surface surrounding the vent wherein said vent recess is concave relative to the interior planar surface;

a gasket ~~disposed~~ secured wholly within said vent recess where it is protected against damage and wherein ~~over which~~ the sheet filter ~~is placed~~ extends over the vent and vent recess; and

a filter cover having a planar surface with a seal ridge in said planar surface wherein said seal ridge is coextensive with said vent recess and sized to fit into said vent recess ~~and surround the vent~~ whereby when said filter cover is operatively secured in place, said seal ridge is forced against said gasket and the sheet filter therebetween forming a seal surrounding the vent.

2. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 1 further comprising:

a protective ridge on the exterior planar surface ~~of the container~~ surrounding the vent.

3. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 2 wherein said protective ridge is the opposite side of said vent recess.

4. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 1 further comprising:
~~mechanical means~~ a locking mechanism securing said filter cover onto the container and urging said seal ridge into said vent recess with a positive force.
5. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 4 wherein said filter cover and the container planar surface containing the vent are spaced apart at the location of the vent when said filter cover is locked onto the container.
6. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 5 wherein the vent is a pattern of holes through the container and the filter cover further comprises:
a pattern of holes through said cover within the area defined by said ~~filter cover seal~~ ridge.
7. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 6 wherein the holes of the vent and said holes of said filter cover are offset relative to each other when said filter cover is secured in place.
8. (Currently Amended) A vent filter seal for a sterilization container having a wall containing a vent through which sterilization media is introduced into the container and a sheet filter inside the container covering the vent comprising:
a vent recess formed in the wall around the vent defining a ridge outside the container;
a gasket disposed wholly in within said vent recess; and
a filter cover having a cover ridge coextensive with said vent recess and sized to fit into said vent recess.
9. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 8 further comprising:

a sheet filter covering the vent and said vent recess and disposed between said vent recess and said filter cover;

means locking said filter cover onto the wall of the container and urging said cover ridge into said vent recess against said gasket with said sheet filter therebetween.

10. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 9 wherein said filter cover and the container wall containing the vent are spaced apart at the location of the vent when said filter cover is locked onto the container wall.

11. (Original) The vent filter seal of claim 10 wherein the vent is a pattern of holes through the container wall and the filter cover further comprises:

a pattern of holes through said cover within the area defined by said filter cover ridge.

12. (Original) The vent filter seal of claim 11 wherein the holes of the vent and said holes of said filter cover are offset relative to each other.

13. (New) The vent filter seal of claim 1 wherein said gasket has a generally concave cross-section.

14. (New) The vent filter seal of claim 8 wherein said gasket has a generally concave cross-section.